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761.00/9-2457

PRIORITY
FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AmConGen, GENOA

30
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

September 24, 1957
DATE

REF :

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	REC'D	IN F OTHER
	EUR-5 9-30	RM/R-2 OAI-8 P-1 210-1 210P-1 L-2 T-2 ARMY-4 NAVY-3 AIR-3 CIA-15 OSD-4 OCB-1 215A-10

SUBJECT: Peripheral: Alleged Escapees from Soviet Prison Camp Give Names of Possible American Prisoners.
Paris-1

The Consulate General was visited on the afternoon of September 20 by two men claiming to be escapees from the Bulun concentration camp (No. 217) in Yakutsk Province of the USSR. They gave their names as Ryszard KOWALSKI and Eric SZEWNOWSKI and said that both were born in Poland, and were World War II prisoners. Kowalski who did all of the talking said that they had made their way from the camp across the USSR, Rumania and Yugoslavia after escaping on May 6, 1957, and had entered Italy two days before their visit to the Consulate General. In Italy he claimed they met a Catholic priest, whose picture they produced, who had given them fresh clothes. He claimed that they were trying to reach Kowalski's mother, Maria KOWALSKI who lives in Paris at 8 Rue du Bac 20.

The apparent reason for their visit was to state that two men claiming to be American army officers captured during the Korean War had been transferred to the camp on July 24, 1955 from another concentration camp. Kowalski gave the men's names as Stanley ROSBICKI of Buffalo, New York and Jack WATSON of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and said that both claimed to be infantry lieutenants. Rosbicki is supposed to be around 34 years of age and Watson about 38 or 39. According to the Consulate General's informant, neither of them knew that other American prisoners had been repatriated.

Kowalski said that the camp was four kilometers from the Lena River and that the inmates worked on stabilizing its banks and also in a coal mine in the vicinity. He said that the food was very bad and insufficient and that the prisoners were given 10 rubles a month as pay, but that this would buy very little. The guards were mainly Mongolian soldiers who were almost as unhappy as the prisoners. They were paid 15 rubles a month, but he was of the opinion that their food was better.

Neither of the men had travel documents or any other documents of identification. The Consulate General cannot vouch for the accuracy of any portion of their story, but they appeared to be honest and straightforward. Kowalski freely answered every question that was put to him with the exception

of giving his and his

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of giving him and his companion's names and these were obtained only after they were promised that the Consulate General would be very discreet and would use them only within the American Government. They had no favors to ask of the Consulate General, requesting only the name of an organization of Poles in Genoa that might be willing to loan them sufficient money to reach Paris. When they were informed that the Consulate General knew of no such organization but that unless they were careful about who they approached they might be apprehended by Italian police, they did not pursue the subject.


David H. Maynard
American Consul General

c.c. AmEmbassy, ROME

Department please pouch to Paris AmEmbassy.

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EMH

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM

TO: DEPARTMENT OF STATE *John DS 14 to DA* Date: July 16, 1958
FROM: AMEMBASSY, PARIS *air 8-20-58 file*
SUBJECT: WELFARE-WHEREABOUTS: Report of American Prisoners in Soviet Union
REF: Embassy's telegram 5770 of June 4, 1948

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CA

(37) The Embassy wishes to advise the Department of the visit of an American Catholic priest, Father ARCIBAL, who came to the Embassy on July 11, 1958, to report an interview he had recently had with one Ryszard WOYKOWSKI. Woykowski, who may be the same person described as KOVALOWSKI in the Embassy's telegram under reference, advised Father Arcibal that he had recently escaped from North Siberia where he had been held as a prisoner in Camp No. 315 at Balun (or Bulun). He further claimed to have been acquainted with two Americans in the same camp, a Reverend John WESTLEY, chaplain, captured in Korea in 1952 and whose home address was given as Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and a First Lieutenant Stanley ROSBICKI of 125 Brooklyn Avenue, Buffalo, New York. Woykowski further advised Father Arcibal that the two Americans, who appeared to be in good health, had requested that he convey this information to the American authorities in order that it could be transmitted to their families. He informed Father Arcibal that he was shortly leaving for Spain, where he could be contacted at the Piazza St. Agatta 17, Madrid.

Although the Embassy believes the Woykowski story a fabrication, it is suggested that the Department may wish to investigate further by contacting the Buffalo address listed above. It is also suggested that the Amembassy, Madrid report to the Department any further details available in the event the person known as Woykowski can be contacted at the Madrid address indicated above.

FAMau:ep

cc: Amembassy, Madrid

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